



## Strategic Competences of Local Tourist Guides

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### Abstract

This study explored the patterns of strategic communicative competences of local tour guides and foreign English speakers. Participants were 22 tour guides and 87 tourists observed at different tourist spots in Central, Sagada, Mountain Province. Their conversations were recorded and went under rigorous discourse analysis. Data were transcribed, organized, clustered, thematized, and validated by the participants. Results suggested that the local tour guides experienced four major communication breakdowns: resource deficit, processing time pressure, perceived deficiency in one's own language, and perceived deficiency in the interlocutor's performance. In light of the communication problems, verbal and non-verbal strategies were used to address communication breakdowns, namely: avoidance and reduction, achievement or compensatory, stalling/time-gaining, self-monitoring, and interactional. Further, the tour guides are creative in using non-verbal strategies, which function either as: replacing or accompanying verbal output. Results are discussed in terms of implications of the local tour guides' communicative engagement despite inherent communication breakdowns. Given the significant variety of strategic competences of the local tourist guides, these competences are expected to be reinforced through educational material, a brochure that emphasizes the communication gambits ready to be used in their workplace.

### KEYWORDS

Strategic  
Tour guides  
Communication breakdown

### Introduction

The call for studies on strategic competence (SC) in detail has long started even in the time of Canale and Swain (1980). Up to this time, research was devoted specifically to addressing breakdowns in communication such as 'false starts, hesitations, and other performance factors, how to address strangers when unsure of their social status—in short, how to cope in an authentic communicative situation and how to keep the communicative channel open.' Important studies testing strategic competences in English as Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language

(EFL) classrooms are found among different countries such as in Spain (Dobao & Martinez, 2007); Montreal (Edwards, 1998); China (Wang et al., 2014; Li-Sheng, 2000); and Malaysia (Kuen et al., 2017). Strategies such as literal translation from the first language, non-linguistic means, and code-switching were found to be commonly employed (Isya, 2018).

A tour guide is defined by RA Act No. 9593 as a Filipino or a permanent foreign national of the Philippines who guides foreign and domestic tourists for a fee, commission, or any other form of lawful remuneration. The tourism standards

include the following roles of tour guides to enhance customer service: help retain existing customers, satisfy the customer, maximize the frequency of customer visits, and generate more positive word-of-mouth advertising (Philippine Congress, 2009).

This study is in an actual tour guiding setting of tourist guides who consider English as their Second Language (L2) while their first language (L1) is Northern *Kankana-ey* of the *aplai* tribe. The L2 tour guides cater to English-speaking foreigners (of different races) who visited Sagada, Mountain Province, between January to March 2020. This study explains the significant area of SC that is still largely unexplored. Since there is already a concession of the difficulty in observing SC inside the classroom, further inquiry is placed to the researcher if community Filipino tourist guides apply this framework. With the demand of the tourism industry for standard customer service and to usher economic growth by developing tourism spots in the Cordillera, it is necessary to maintain the communicative efficiency of tour guides. The current discussion calls for premium importance to these workers who are considered the lifeblood of the tourism industry.

Aside from local tourists, foreign tourists are assets to the industry, not only through the income generated from travel bookings, employment, sales, and businesses, but also the endless opportunity of human relations. The local community, especially the tour guides, gets to interact with highly proficient English speakers. For Filipinos whose second language is English, the experience of speaking with native speakers of English would harness further the performance in the language. The language acquisition continues as tour guides build confidence in their chosen career and challenge themselves to be better at speaking. This research bridges the inhibitions experienced by most ESL learners due to the lack of communicative competencies by capitalizing on Strategic Competence as a fairground in which English language skills and abilities could be further developed. Specifically, the study aims to: 1) determine communicative breakdowns present in the interlocutors' communicative exchange; 2) determine the verbal and non-verbal strategic competences employed to compensate for the communication breakdown, and 3) determine materials that can be developed to increase local tourist guides' awareness of strategic competence.

## Strategic Competence

The term Communication Strategy (CS) was first claimed by Selinker (1972) as cited by Wang et al. (2014). It is one of the five central processes involved in L2 learning. But it was only when Canale and Swaine (1980) included communication strategy in the Communicative Model under the sub-competency that strategic competency attracted a lot of discussions, (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). What is remarkable in the development of the theory is the response of many language researchers that contributed to the development of models and typologies of communication strategy to address communication breakdown. The first typology of CS was developed by Tarone in 1977 as cited in Tarone (1983, 1981, 1980).

Important studies testing strategic competences in ESL and EFL classrooms are found in different countries such as Spain (Dobao & Martinez, 2007); Montreal, (Edwards, 1998); China, (Wang et al., 201; Li-Sheng, 2000); and Malaysia, (Kuen et al., 2017). The most important development among these studies relates to discussing the intercultural aspect of strategic competence as seen to delineate it from other competences (sociolinguistics and discourse). Li-Sheng (2000) points out that strategic competence is not culture-specific. Meanwhile, the studies of Kuen et al. (2017), Rabab'ah (2016), and Wang et al. (2014) took aggressive approaches to teach the strategies explicitly to learners by developing classroom interventions and lessons that target specific strategic competencies.

The most recent model for Strategic Competence is from Celce-Murcia et al. (1995), who came up with a detailed taxonomy for communication strategies. Figure 1 shows the holistic interaction of different competences, including socio-cultural competence, linguistic competence, actional competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

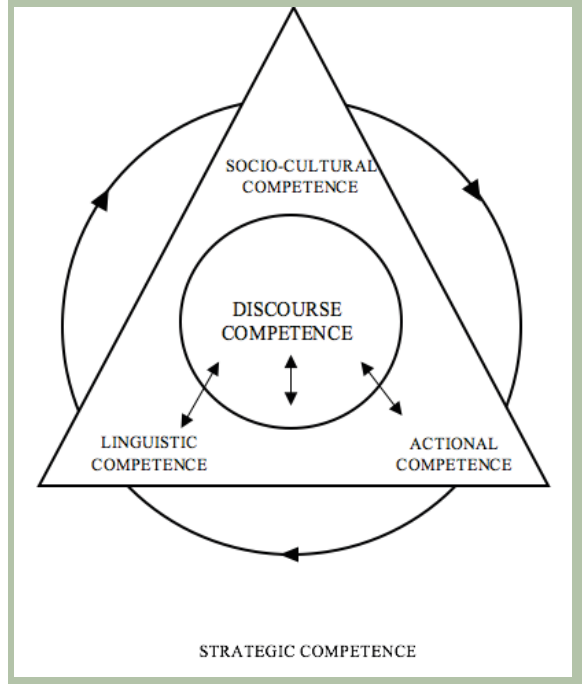
The primary focus of this research is on Strategic Competence (SC) and its five classifications: avoidance or Reduction Strategies, achievement or compensatory strategies, stalling or time-gaining strategies, self-monitoring strategies, and interactional strategies. The SC is defined as knowledge of communication and how to use them, according to Celce-Murcia et al. (1995). This research will adopt the pedagogically oriented



framework since it will gear towards teaching SC to tour guide students. The model of Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) leans toward practical considerations in communication and is the latest theory that puts Strat Com forward in a greater role: to unite all other competences.

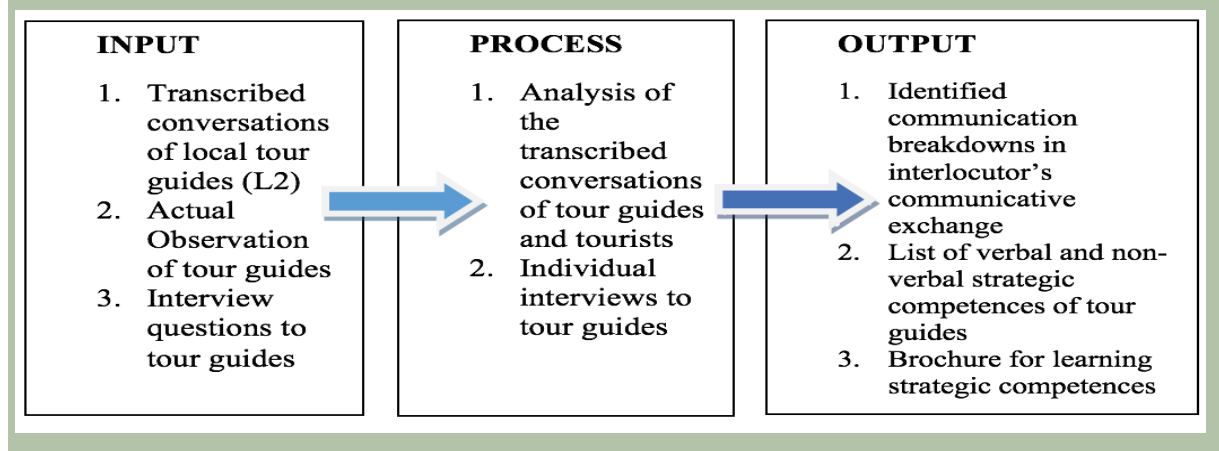
According to Dörnyei and Kormos (1998), L2 speakers have difficulty with monolingual English speakers as they speak more ‘slowly’ and ‘hesitantly’ than L1 speakers. It is due to automatic speech processing that is present in L1 but absent in L2. This made L2 speakers cautionary to grammatical rules, and phonological encoding that deters speech is prone to errors. Verbal and Non-verbal Strategic Competences are problem-solving mechanisms to solve L2 Communication deficits. Verbal SCs are strategies enumerated in the most recent model of Strategic Competence developed by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995). Figure 2, the paradigm of the study, illustrates the salient process of this research.

**Figure 1**  
*Schematic Representation Model of Communicative Competence Developed by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995)*



The input contains the recorded and transcribed conversation between the tour guide and the tourist. The transcription was accompanied by narrative descriptions captured by the researcher with close observation of their nonverbal gestures and contexts of their communication. Also, the researcher interviewed the tour guides who gave further inputs in their daily communication practice. After compiling and putting all together the data, the transcriptions were analyzed in the second panel. The conversations between the two interlocutors were closely read by the researcher taking note of the emerging themes and patterns in the communication of the tour guides.

**Figure 2**  
*Paradigm of the Study*



## Methodology

This research employed the qualitative approach, specifically descriptive-discourse analysis, and interview. It is interested in understanding how participants behave and make meaning in their communication. Discourse analysis and systematic conceptual arrangement were utilized to explore communication breakdowns between two interlocutors and the combinations of ESL strategic competences existing in the conversation. Discourse analysis evolved from linguistic studies, literary criticism, and semiotics. It is concerned with language-in-use, that is, how individuals accomplish personal, social, and political projects through language. A close reading of the transcribed interlocutors' communicative exchange will reveal the conventions and the relationships that play along with their discourse.

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### Locale and Participants in the Study

The municipality of Sagada is located in Mountain Province, Cordillera Administrative Region, Northern Luzon. Its 19 barangays are grouped into five political divisions based on their geographical locations. This research covered only the central barangays Poblacion, Dagdag, and Demang. Within these three barangays are three different Tour Guides Associations namely: Sagada Environmental Guides Association (SEGA), Sagada Ethnos Tour Guide Organization (SETGO), and Sagada Genuine Guides Association (SAGGAS). Hospitality services always include good and fluent communication. Tourist guides of Sagada have frequent encounters with foreigners, and the

maturity of their communicative pattern is rich in data. According to Dulnuan (2005), Sagada, Mountain Province is the third most visited tourist spot in the Cordillera aside from Baguio City and Banaue, Ifugao. Sagada is a melting pot of locals and foreign visitors interacting daily in the advent of tourism. Sagada was chosen as the locale of the study due to the commendable communication ability of tourist guides.

The tour guide participants of the study were selected according to the following criteria: a) registered local tourist guide of Sagada, b) two years and above experience in tour guiding, c) belongs to the Tour Guide Associations located within Central Sagada, and d) willing to be observed and interviewed voluntarily. The tour guide participants are composed of 10 males and 12 females. Most of them were high school graduates and had undergone training and seminars. They work five to eight hours every day and overtime during peak seasons. They are rice and coffee farmers during the lean seasons of tourism in Sagada. Most of them are natives, speak the *Aplai Kankanaey* dialect, Ilokano, Filipino, and consider English their second language.

The youngest participants are senior high school students taking Tourism courses in Sagada. Endorsed by their schools these students take their on-the-job training during holidays when tourists flock to Sagada. Meanwhile, the oldest tour guides are mostly farmers who are part-time tour-guides. They usually do the town and mountain tours which are less physically demanding than cave and underground river tours.

Meanwhile, the 87 foreign participants are mostly American English-speaking Filipinos, French, and German. They just came from Baguio City and they dropped by Sagada for a day or two before going to Buscalan, Kalinga to visit the famous tattoo artist Apo Whang-od. Since Sagada is often a mid-place destination, tourists are exhausted and are looking for light adventures and places to rest. The Buscalan destination is known to be exhaustive, that is why tourists would reserve energy while they are in Sagada. As observed, they become more talkative and inquisitive about Cordilleran culture and tour guides take this opportunity to establish communicative relations.



## Data Collection

The research orientation and guideline material were read and discussed with the tourist guides. The guidelines explicitly cited the study's expectations and allowed time for questions and clarifications. It also included the number of observations to be conducted, the length of interviews, and consent issues. Before gathering data, the researcher sought the approval of the Mayor's Office of the Municipality of Sagada and the endorsement of the Municipal Tourism Office to conduct the study among different tourist spots in Sagada, Mountain Province. The approved communication letter was furnished to the three Tour Guides Associations and forwarded to the different Tour Guide Hubs for their information.

The researcher used an audio recorder and field notes as verbal evidence. The field notes include a daily account that captured the nonverbal communications during the conversation. A phone camera was also used to document non-verbal communication during the observation. The researcher also arranged interview schedules with the participants to supplement needed data that were not captured by the voice recorder.

The researcher visited different organizational tour hubs usually found at the tour site entrances, established connections with the tour guides, and introduced the research to them. The researcher asked for permission to observe the tour and consent to take photos and audio recordings of the authentic and meaningful conversation between the guide and the visitor. The researcher spent almost eight hours daily throughout the data gathering for this research. All the recordings were made using a Sony Walkman with a built-in microphone and a recording range of roughly three meters. The researcher stayed in the hub with tour guides waiting for their clients; on days with no clients, the researcher would return the next day. While recording the information during the tour, the researcher assisted in river crossing, spelunking, carrying things, and supporting visitors.

The researcher prior to the observation explained to the participants—tour guide and local or foreign tourists, the nature, objectives, and purpose of the documentation. They were briefed that the recorder would capture their conversations, photos, and videos would be taken during the tour. Tour guides were informed that

they can always withdraw whenever they find the research inconvenient. Fortunately, no participant withdrew.

Interviews with participants also took place after the tour-guiding event and during their free time. Participants were briefed on the nature of the research, and the confidentiality clause was explained to them. They were informed about the audio recorder capturing the interview session to be used for research purposes only. The participants were asked to sign the consent paper after the interview.

Non-verbal communication of tour guides was likewise observed during the data gathering. Non-verbal communication is important and commonly executed to cope with the limitations of the linguistic capacity of L2 speakers. It is highly observable through picture and video documentation, and written narratives.

## Treatment of Data

The researcher transcribed all the audio conversations between the tour guide and the foreign guest. The researcher recorded about 48 hours of conversation, an average of at least 30-minute observation per participant throughout data gathering. The researcher highlighted the communication breakdown cues in the transcript. He also studied the presence and absence of strategic competency that follows through in the utterances among the tourist guides. In identifying the SC, both the guide's erroneous sentences and their well-formed ones were taken into consideration.

To support the themes of this study, the researcher chose verbatim related to the strategic competence patterns established in the research. Claims made in this research were counter-analyzed by corroborating with existing research to stand the scrutiny and arguments posed by internal and external validity questions. According to Campbell and Fiske (1959), triangulation is a convergent validation of data from at least three viewpoints. The researcher conducted informal interviews with the co-tour guides of the research participants to confirm the observations made by the researcher. The triangulation interview included the Municipal Tourism Office staff and the communication officer at the Mayor's Office, who closely works with and is part of the panel that certifies the



license of tour guides.

Finally, the confidentiality of participants' information and responses were secured by assigning a code name to each participant to hide their identity. All information was only used for research purposes with the signed letter of full consent of the participants. The data gathered were sent to the participants for review and approval as part of the validation.

## Results and Discussion

Linguistic analysis of communication breakdown is guided by understanding the errors in five levels according to Dörnyei and Kormos (1998) and Dörnyei and Scott (1997). Communication problems could be of different types: resource deficit, processing time pressure, perceived deficiency in one's language, and

perceived deficiency in the interlocutor's performance.

### Resource Deficit

The linguistic knowledge of L2 speakers is important to be sufficient for them to carry out a conversation, specifically lexicon, and vocabulary. However, a resource deficit problem was observed among the tour guides. This problem occurs when there is a knowledge gap in L2 speakers that prohibits the verbalization of the message. The deficit is characterized into three components, lexical, grammatical, and phonological as described in Table 2.

### Processing Time Pressure

Processing Time Pressure (PTP) refers to the amount of time the L2 speaker will need to respond in the target language. The pressure to respond immediately indicates fluid and engaging

**Table 2**

*Summary of Resource Deficit Components Observed Among Sagada Tour Guides*

Communication Breakdown/ Problem	Description	Examples
1.) Lexical Deficit	Difficulty in processing the words spoken because of the lack of vocabulary	TG7: Stay here ma'am, little information here. So this the Cemetery and this is the tomb, as you observed, almost all the tombs have the firewoods because every All Souls Day on Nobe-Nobe- November 1, when they visit their loved one-dead, instead of going to get candle, they are going to light the candle it's the firewood that they are going to light up- the old traditional way. FT: I cannot understand, never mind. TG7: Okay
2.) Grammatical Deficit	A lack of knowledge and use of grammar structure of L2	TG2: Ahh the first, what we are doing here, how we bury, if somebody get (sic) dead instead of burying at the, we put it in the borial entrance of the cave, and the secondary hanging coffins and then the modern cemetery.
3.) Phonological Deficit	A core deficit in the ability to understand and produce constituent sounds which comprise spoken words.	FT: So how many people are buried in Lumiang? TG3: Lumiang? Lots of people of them maam, we cannot count. FT: A lot? So there is more. TG3: A lot there, yes maam. FT: Hanging coffins? TG3: Piled coffins at the entrance of the Lumiang cave, piled, piled, it's piled. FT: ah piled, I thought it's pie!



conversation. However, it is not automatic for L2 speakers. Meanwhile, the English-speaking visitors patiently wait and understand the tour guides' processing time. Table 3 shows three ways an L2 speaker is gaining time for language processing.

### Perceived Deficiency in One's Own Language

The deficiency in one's own language happens when the L2 speaker detects and concedes to the communication problems indicated in Table 4 or when tour guides communicate their mishaps in their speech.

**Table 3**

*Summary of Resource Deficit Components Observed Among Sagada Tour Guides*

Communication Breakdown/ Problem	Description	Examples
1.) The occurrence of unfilled pauses	Remaining silent while thinking of the next words to say. IPA symbol for perceptible pause: (.) is used.	TG21: So this is Central Sagada, this is not like this before- [FT: yeah okay] before, it is more on nature. The traditional houses are made of wood (.) now it's colorful.
2.) The use of fillers	The unconscious insert of lexical fillers (actually, you know, okay, now ) or non-lexical Fillers (ahm, uh, mmm)	Lexical Fillers: TG22: Because my brother when they are youth 'ye know [FT: h:m] you know youth they are very:ah adventurous...
3.) The production of repeated words	The unconscious self-repetition of words or other interlocutor's words/response	TG13: Okay wait madam, by the way madam, this is the second rock formation we can see here inside the cave (FT: ah:m) can you imagine? The legs side by side and the womb and I don't know what is in the center (FT: ahahah, I know it!)... that's why they call Sumaguing Cave, Porn Cave because of this rock formation (FT: Porn Cave?) Yeah it's a porn cave (FT: Porn or pawn?) Po:::rn, porno (FT: Porno!)

**Table 4**

*Summary of Perceived Deficiencies in One's Own Language, Sagada Tour Guides*

Communication Breakdown/ Problem	Description	Examples
1.) Lapse in words	L2 speaker's conscious error in the words spoken	TG14: There are also vacant tomb, it's a:h [FT: vacant?] yeah, reserved for their husband or wife [FT: yeah, yeah, I understand]
2.) Inappropriate message	L2 speaker's conscious revoke of incongruous words	TG19: One thing more that kind of burial caves or hanging coffins, its not only in the Philippines. It's not like that this is being owned by Sagada because of hanging coffins no, or others but this is what they call the Austronesian tradition and culture, okay?
3.) Incomplete knowledge	L2 speaker's conscious restoration of incomplete context of words spoken	TG7: But they only allow tourist to enter five o'clock [FT: a lot of tourist?] no, they only allow [FT: allow] tourist to enter the gate at five o'clock, beyond five o'clock no more [ah:m, what time is it closed?] yes that's what I mean, they are closed at five o'clock maam.



### Perceived Deficiency in the Interlocutor's Performance

In this last theme of communication breakdown, the deficiency comes from the perception of the L2 speaker experiencing disturbances such as noise, poor hearing, lack of concentration, or lack of comprehension. Table 5 summarizes instances where the message was interrupted by the speaker's poor performance: unheard and unclear responses, admission of non-understanding, and others.

### Verbal and Nonverbal Strategic Competences Employed to Compensate Communication Breakdown

The L2 speakers' process of speaking the target language is not automatic. L2 speakers need time to construct the grammar before verbalizing the message. In between those minds and mouth coordination, L2 incurred communication errors. However, throughout time, experience has taught L2 speakers to self-improvise strategies in order to keep the communication line open. The following

**Table 5**

*Summary of Perceived Deficiencies in the Interlocutor's Performance Among Sagada Tour Guides*

Communication Breakdown/ Problem	Description	Examples
1.) Unheard response	L2 speaker realized that he wasn't able to hear the response of the other person	TG5: This is the second part. FT: o:hkay [o:h aha, this is the first journey to the second part so ((Foreigners are busy conversing because of noise inside the cave)) we should remove our foot wares. FT: yeah [TG5: remove] take it out here? TG5: yeah here. So we can feel the:ah cold rock.
2.) Unclear response	L2 speaker doubts the response of the Interlocutor because it wasn't his desired answer. An unclear response means there is a lapse in the reception of the message therefore needs to strategize a corrective response and suspend immediate response	TG12: This is the traditions of the pagans, you know pagans? FT: yeah ((unconvincing)) TG12: Pagans are not Christians. Yeah they must have to sit in a chair doing the ceremony.
3.) Admission of non-understanding	L2 speaker responds with an honest and open admission of non-understanding of the message.	TG21: The flower starts like that. [FT: Do you know the English name?] A:h, the:ah.I try to ah [FT: In Germany, we call it trumpet flowers] TG21: I try it to find it in English how is the scientific name- there's a scientific name of this. FT: A:h [TG21: ah yeah, yeah, actually when all drugs are taken in good dose, this might cure some illness.] TG3: The first to be buried was the first Christian convert to the name... I'm doubtful, we do not have the record.
4. Unsure of what was heard/ feigning understanding	L2 speaker himself cannot make a sure response to the Interlocutor based from a clear understanding of the message because he consciously has doubt, unheard or feign reception of the message	TG21: This is what they call candy house, look at the fire, fire ah [FT: Fire place yeah] the fire place? [FT: a:h yeah] it looks like candy [FT: a:h] so it's called the candy house.





**Table 5** continuation...

Communication Breakdown/ Problem	Description	Examples
5. Guessing	L2 speaker implies uncertainty and indecision his response	TG21: It's called old village of Demang of Sagada because that was the oldest village, that was the oldest, oldest village, that is where the oldest people lived before yes FT: So how many generations you have lived here? [TG21: generation? [FT: How many grandfathers?] TG21: Grandfather haha [FT: about 1800?] yeah 1600s yeah [FT: 1600s?] Either 1400s because, so yeah. ((aborted))
6. Other-repair	L2 speaker corrects something in the interlocutor's speech	FT: How many stairs? TG17: How many stairs? ((steps)) It's 289. 289 from the Church – the stairs until here [FT: How many stairs eh?] 289, [FT: 289 up?] No we are not coming back, we are going down there after the Hanging coffins.

components of SC were derived from Celce-Murcia et al. (1995). Also, the definition provided by Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) is the most accepted definition of SC adopted in this study—the knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies in which to enable the learner to overcome difficulties when communication breakdowns occur and which enhance the efficiency of communication. There are five major components of Strat Com and have specific sub-components each.

### **Avoidance or Reduction Strategies**

Parts of the input or message from L2 speakers could be deleted, reduced, or replaced to avoid communication breakdown. This strategy may not be the best option in communication as it will leave the other person hanging. However, according to Dörnyei and Kormos (1998), this will help the speaker get over the perceived disastrous situations wherein there are sensitive topics, errors in content that would be best to drop than to invite arguments, and hostile answers from the other speaker. Table 6 shows the topic replacement and avoidance sub-strategies.

### **Achievement or Compensatory Strategies**

This strategy calls for the linguistic capability of L2 speakers to extend their word bank to communicate their message successfully and achieve their communicative goal. There are ten

sub-devices for Achievement and Compensatory, specific in different situations (Table 7).

The sub-strategies of achievement and compensatory strategies namely: circumlocution, approximation, all-purpose words, non-linguistic means, restructuring, word-coinage, literal translation from L1, foreignizing, code-switching, and retrieval were found to be consistent strategies identified in the models of Faerch and Kasper (1983), Willems (1987), and Celce-Murcia et al. (1995).

### **Circumlocution**

An attempt to describe the characteristics of the concepts. It entails the L2 to re-conceptualize the chunk/part of the message to become more comprehensible to the other person. (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998). Examples include tour guides who were creative in describing some difficult cultural terms and concepts unknown to foreigners. TG15 compares one description of their ancestors to a popular and relatable character 'Spiderman'; TG22 used the metaphor 'honeycomb' to describe Sagada; these examples are what Brown and Yule (1983) call 'context of situation' in communication.

Tour guides make references to familiar characters oftentimes in famous western films in order for them to be understood. They need to connect prior and existing most probable information and pose it as a question to the visitors.



**Table 6***Summary of Sub-Strategies of Avoidance or Reduction Observed Among Sagada Tour Guides*

Strategies	Description	Examples
1.) Message replacement	L2 selects parts of the intended message to be replaced with other components	TG14: At All Saint's Day, we do not use candles, we use wood [FT:wood!] that is why you see these charcoal ((use wooden stick to point)). FT: Not candle? TG14: Not candle because when it is November and there is a little shower and there is a strong wind, while the wind blows, the fire grows and the candles die. Though they could use candles, it could easily die.
2.) Topic Avoidance	L2 selects parts of the intended message to be deleted	TG8: Okay, actually we have names, we have two names here, before we were born, before they remove our _ ((points at his belly)) [FT: a:h yes yeah] they will give you...., we call it Igorot name.
3.) Message Abandonment	L2 chooses to give up the message	((Post-articulatory decisions of L2 Speaker, difficult to quantify))

**Table 7***Summary of Sub-Strategies of Achievement and Compensatory Observed Among Sagada Tour Guides*

Strategies	Description	Examples
1.) Circumlocution	An attempt to describe the characteristics of the concepts entails the L2 to re-conceptualize the chunk/ part of the message to become more understandable to the other person (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998).	TG15: If we could just imagine, our-our ancestors were most likely like Spiderman and the/ah/ yeah FT: Yeah-yeah TG15: but ah, but this is how they ah, I explained that/ah/ earlier that they would scaffoldings, but before there were no scaffoldings, they would use the vines from the forest and would ah, pull the coffins up and settle them there.
2.) Approximation	The use of alternative, superordinate related term that shares semantic features with the target word or structure.	TG10: Fetal position, like a ball ah we ahmm, passing them from the house, where they would be passing them each other. It is like a ball, the dead body.
3.) All-purpose words	The use of commonly used/ general 'empty' words, almost an expression, in place of lacking words (Dörnyei & Kormos, 1998).	So Actually- TG2, TG10, TG13, TG22  Okay, so- TG1, TG3, TG4, TG5, TG6, TG11, TG15, TG22  'Ye know what I mean? - TG22

Meanwhile, the literal translation or transliteration for Paribakht (1985) is the most common resort to keep communication open. Participant #3 translated cultural terms into English and promotes native terms to guests. This strategy was seen in Isya (2018) where compensatory strategies were widely adopted by students facing communication

breakdowns.

### **Approximation**

The use of alternative, a superordinate related term that shares semantic features with the target word or structure. For instance, the use of



**Table 7 Continuation...**

Strategies	Description	Examples
4.) Nonlinguistic Means	<p>The use of meaningful gestures (mime) in replace or to espouse verbal output, (Paribakht, 1985).</p> <p>A. Replacing Verbal Output- This non-linguistic strategy is used by the speaker to substitute for linguistic output</p> <p>B. Accompanying verbal output- A para-linguistic strategy that uses hands, fingers, facial expressions and maximize the aid of body parts to help convey meaning.</p>	<p>FT: How do you put the coffins there?</p> <p>TG7: Ahh before, they vines to climb...climb, climb, People here are ... ((TG7 would also raise his right hand in 'L' position then his left palm will cup the right hand's muscle and smile- this means strong))</p> <p>FT: Ahh okay</p> <p>TG8: Okay, actually we have names, we have two names here, before we were born, before they remove our _ ((points at his belly)) [FT: a:h yes yeah] they will give you, we call it Igorot name.</p> <p>TG3: So, we would light a big bonfire there (*point at the big cross up the cemetery) where we will, we would ligh-/ah/ light torches and bring them to the tombstones.</p>
5.) Restructuring	A change of a verbal plan because of perceived difficulties and providing an alternative plan. The cue is an unfinished utterance.	TG: Sumaguig Cave is divided into 3 stages, first stage is the difficult part (.) I'm not discouraging you but I'm telling the truth, all we do is just hold on the rock properly and hold our balance [FT: hm:m] ((The tourist looks worried))
6.) Literal Translation from L1	Translating literally a word or group of words either from L1 or L2	TG3: It's called Echo Valley but the original name was/ is:ah Paytokan [FT:Paytokan] that is our vernacular, it came from the word 'paytok' [FT: a:h okay] that's what we will be doing when we get down. We will be, we will do 'paytok'.
7.) Foreignizing	<p>Adjusting the pronunciation of a L1 word in the sound of target/ foreign language.</p> <p>The opposite is adjusting the pronunciation of L2 to native pronunciations, (nativizing)</p>	<p>TG16: Sagadians</p> <p>TG16: Picture /pikchor/ Sacred /sak-red/</p>
8.) Code Switching	The practice of moving back and forth from L1 to L2 when there is a perceived difficulty in finding the appropriate term from the target language.	TG9: Ah I'm not the old, I'm must be research okay, for example if somebody get dead (sic) the time we butcher and butcher and we call all people, relatives, kilala mo man o hindi, come eat all you can and maki lamay ka, kaya hindi lang isang pamilya, so we reached 35 ((pigs)).
9.) Retrieval	An attempt to retrieve a lexical item by saying a series of incomplete words/ sounds to recall the term in the target language, (ex: Tip of the tongue, use of similar words, mumbling)	TG7: As you observed, almost all tombs have the firewoods because every All Souls Day on Nobe-Nobe-November 1, they visit their loved-one dead...



'ball' to explain the tight and cloth-binding of a dead person by the TG10: Fetal position, like a ball ah we ahmm, passing them from the house, where they would be passing them each other. It is like a ball, the dead body.

### **All-Purpose Words**

This is a notable strategy though oftentimes considered empty and meaningless. They function as fillers and are unconsciously included in the speech, such as 'so actually' by TG2, TG10, TG13, and TG22, 'okay' and 'so' by TG1, TG3, and almost all of the participants. TG 22 meanwhile is fond of using 'ye know what I mean'.

### **Nonlinguistic Means-Nonlinguistic**

Non-verbal communication functions in two different ways. First, it could replace the words such as the example of TG7 and TG8 in which words were unuttered and actions, gestures, or show realia (i.e plants, coffee beans) took over. Second, non-verbal could accompany the utterance of the speaker such as how Participant #1 and Participant #2 simultaneously use verbal and non-verbal output during their discussions at the tour site.

### **Restructuring**

A change of a verbal plan because of perceived difficulties and providing an alternative plan. The cue is an unfinished utterance. Participant #13 gave a precaution to the visitors or Foreign Tourist (FT):

TG: Sumaguig Cave is divided into 3 stages, first stage is the difficult part (.) I'm not discouraging you but I'm telling the truth, all we do is just hold on the rock properly and hold our balance.

FT: hm:m ((The tourist looks worried))

### **Literal Translation, Nativizing (Opposite of Foreignizing), and Code-Switching**

Popular strategies forwarded by Celce-Murcia et al. (1993) show ways how tour guides play with words and speeches. Understandably, L2 speakers are used to translating, and code-switching whenever they ran out of words, and since they are programmed in the L1, these two skills are the

immediate strategies to keep the communication spontaneous. It could be later translated back to L2 or the target language and in between these translation strategies, the tour guide has the time to think of the appropriate terms and descriptions.

### **Retrieval**

An attempt to retrieve a lexical item by saying a series of incomplete words/sounds to recall the term in the target language, (ex: tip of the tongue phenomena, use of similar words, mumbling). Though this may cause delay, through exposure and practice, this could improve. For example, TG7 stated: "As you observed, almost all tombs have the firewoods because every All Souls Day on Nobe-Nobe-November 1, they visit their loved-one dead."

### **Stalling/Time-Gaining Strategies**

Time-gaining mechanisms are called upon when an anticipated stop could be prolonged. To restore this, firstly, fillers/ hesitation gambits (Dörnyei & Scott, 1998) could be employed such as non-lexical 'ehm' and 'uhhh', or lexical terms 'well', 'actually', 'where was I...?'. Secondly, self and other repetitions that could be retrieved immediately from the string of thought may be employed. The time spent maintains a natural flow of turn-taking and self-correcting for both interlocutors. Table 8 below shows examples of the different fillers used and repeated by tour guides.

In fact, with the freedom they enjoy having a relaxed environment and long hours of accompanying the guests, the tour guides have ample time to converse with the visitors without much tension. They have abundant use of gambits like 'So I mentioned earlier'-TG3, 'As I said a while ago'-TG7 and "This is the one I'm telling you"- TG12. Tour guides of Sagada have a natural, lively conversation and are known to throw a lot of humorous statements, especially during cave visitation and mountain trekking. They need to do this for the visitors to not think about the tiring and difficult walking or the fear of going inside the caves.

### **Self-Monitoring Strategies**

The L2 speaker has a complex communication processing that when a communication problem



**Table 8**

*Summary of Sub-Strategies of Stalling/Time-Gaining Observed Among Sagada Tour Guides*

Strategies	Description	Examples
1.) Fillers/ hesitation devices/ gambits	Lexical or non-lexical terms could fill the pause while taking time to think of the next words in L2.	TG2- Okay, and now your questions a while ago sir? Why they hang them, yeah, because... TG3- So I mentioned earlier TG7- As I said a while ago TG12- This is the one I'm telling you
2.) Self-Repetition	Repeating a word/ string of words enough to gain time to think for the appropriate words in the target language	TG17: And you will notice those chips of charcoals [FT: This?] charcoals, charcoals, yes, yes yes! They are everywhere ah that is how we remember our dead during All Saint's Day...
3.) Other-Repetition	Repeating the interlocutor's word/ string of words to gain time in responding appropriately	FT: He is your uncle? TG: Yes sir, and:ah because of the pine tree that is their natural preservatives also that is why. [FT: Ah:h. What age did he died?] TG2: He died in the natural death. [FT: Yeah, but in the age of what?] TG: Ninety, you're not old enough [FT: 90?] TG: Ninety years old, he was 90 years old.

arises, immediately after articulating the target language, the speaker immediately stops and internalizes errors possibly incurred. An immediate correction (Dornyei & Scott, 1997), like self-initiated repair or rephrasing, occurs. As observed, tour guides would learn from many experiences they encounter every day. The researcher, in many instances, has also heard how tour guides would ask their co-tour guides, especially those who have longer experiences, advice, and guidance on approaching communication problems, like 'what to say in times like this or that'.

### **Interactional Strategies**

An utterance called trigger will prompt the interlocutors to do meaning negotiation, clarify, repetition, and comprehension checks. Verbalizing the uncertainty and being open to admitting misunderstanding help clarify the message during conversation rather than leaving the conversation unclarified and putting up a façade of being all-knowing.

### **Meaningful Non-Verbal Communication**







According to Krauss et al. (1996), "all hand gestures are hand movements, but not all hand

movements are gestures." Meaningful non-linguistic gestures (Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Paribakht, 1985; & Celce-Murcia, 1995) were accounted as an essential aspect of the success of tour guides in their communication. The non-verbal communication found in this research is grouped into two observable categories: meaningful non-verbal hand gestures and nonlinguistic means. The meaningful nonverbal hand gestures have six features that express thoughts, serve as cues, and accompany verbal strategies. The gestures were in the context of cultural knowledge, material, and practices of tour guides. Through experience and observation, tour guides have repeatedly employed these gestures in their communication (Table 9).

A few of these nonlinguistic means are mime and role-plays. Examples are *Sangadil* or the traditional burial practice of *i-Sagada*; 'vine-swinging or 'Tarzan', this re-enacts how the locals climbed and hold to the vines/roots to place coffins in high rock mountains; and finally, *Paytok* or half-leap walk wherein the tour guides demonstrates how locals trek through the small paths in Echo-Valley. Mime and role-plays are essential nonlinguistic means to extend and create mental pictures of the scenes being described by the tour guide to the foreign visitors.



**Table 9***Six Meaningful Hand Gestures in Non-Verbal Communication Observed in Sagada Tour Guides*

Hand Gestures	Caricature	Description
1.) Explaining		Both or either any of hands move lightly in a relaxed manner in front of the speaker or on his sides. He/she moves along with the rhythm and timing of speaking.
2.) Pacifying		Both or either any of the hands with palms facing downwards to signal 'stop' and 'stay' at a certain area or pacify noise and unnecessary movements of the other person.
3.) Directing		Either any of the hands extended (open palm or point finger) to direct a position, area, item, or to a person. The body of the coordinates with the hand movement and slightly turn to the hand direction.
4.) Re-creating Scenes		Either any of the hands is slightly angled with fingers slightly cupped / c-position to re-create scenes. It freely moves with the narration. Denotes imaginary, unknown, or not present items, places, things, etc. C-position may mean, 'coffin', 'cemetery', 'community', 'echo' etc.
5.) Emphasizing		Both or either any of the hands with down-position and firm fist to demonstrate emphasize when speaking. Particularly it could mean accentuate words being described like 'hold', 'grip', and 'rock'.
6.) Assisting		Both or either any of the hands are in a firm right-angle position and upward to assist trekking visitors. Sometimes even without words just being gestured, the other person could just hold on to the firm hand.

### **Interfacing the Communication Breakdowns and Strategic Competences**

For many years, there have been problems with mismatch strategies, according to Varadi (1992). This problem has been attributed to a lack of studies and actual documentation of naturalistic interlocutors' communication. To address the experienced difficulties in the communication breakdown of the tour guides, the verbal and non-verbal strategic competences are being forwarded

in this research. 'Problem-orientedness' has been the key feature of Communication Strategy.

'Problem-orientedness' is being forwarded by Bialystok (1990) as a meeting point between strategy and communication breakdown. In the case of local tourist guides in Sagada, the communication breakdowns observed were matched to strategic competences. However, tour guides are encouraged to fit their strategies on the applicability of strategic competences in the



situation. Strategies could overlap and could not necessarily follow a specific order. Table 10 provides a problem-solving mechanism on how tour guides could guide themselves in addressing the communication breakdown.

### Socio-cultural Competence

Socio-cultural competence borders on the ability of the speaker to clarify the meaning and the concept of every word he or she used, and banking on his creative, cultural, historical, and conceptual worldview. This ability is reflected in their linguistic exploits that shape their semantic discourses (Paribakht, 1985). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, also known as the linguistic relativity hypothesis, links to culture and thought, whereby language use in a cultural context can affect thought. The following examples are linguistic determinism of tour guides under socio-cultural competence.

### Historical Property

This is an attempt to describe the characteristic of the concept by referring to events that recount events and narratives in the past. Below is an example of an explanation about the cultural events by almost discussing the origin of the place called "Echo-Valley". The local tourist guide uses words such as *before*, *that time*, *from then on* and uses the past tense form.

TG3: I'll have to explain. So, can you hear me from there sir?

FV: Yeah, yeah

TG3: I don't need to shout, because when I shout, the dead body will/ah/ rise up (laughter).

Okay so, hmmm this is what we call Echo Walley, it was called such/ah/ ah because/oh/ when we do our burial here, we would do the ceremonial clapping of hands and shouting before, the men would carry the dead body/ah/ to the hanging coffins.

**Table 10**

*Matrix of Guided Communication Problem-Solving in Communication*

Communication Breakdown	Observable Indications	Suggested Strategic Competencies
a.) Resource Deficit (Lexical, Grammatical, Phonological)	a.) Unfilled pauses and loss of words b.) Incoherent grammar c.) mispronunciation	a.) Approximation b.) Use of all-purpose words c.) substitution plus foreignizing d.) translation, e.) Appeals for help (Direct and Indirect Appeal)
b.) Processing Time Pressure	a.) The occurrence of unfilled pause b.) Use of fillers c.) Production of repeated words)	a.) Substitution b.) Message reduction c.) Replacement
c.) Perceived Deficiency in One's Own Language	a.) Lapse in words b.) Inappropriate message c.) Incomplete knowledge	a.) Self-corrections b.) Complete omission c.) Appeals for help
d.) Perceived Deficiency in the Interlocutor's Performance	a.) Un-heard response b.) Un-clear response c.) Admission of non-understanding d.) Unsure of what was heard/ feigning understanding e.) Guessing	a.) Check questions b.) Self-corrections



We would shout to inform the first one's who came here there, that we would be bringing one which will be joining them. So, when that time, the locals were having the burial here, there were some foreign tourists watching then and when ah they were/ah/ they were listening to what they are saying and were observing them ah they heard that the echo came back and when they got home to the inns, they told/ah/ the inn keeper ask them where they come ... where they went. They said, they came from echo valley, "Oh we came from echo valley and we saw lots of people and they were shouting and the echo did came very clear." So/ah/ from then on the area... that's why it's called Echo Valley.

### **Culture-Bound Feature**

It is a way of explaining the step-by-step procedure and any characteristic of a certain concept that is unknown to another person due to the lack of familiarity, or no direct translation to the English language, thus highly culture-specific. The speaker may describe the procedure or the process for the other person to understand. Below is an example of a tour guide explaining a burial practice specific to the Cordillera called – *Sangadil*.

FT: Oh, the chair!

TG3: Yes maam, so we will be tying them in the chair tied/ah/ mouth tied/ah/ feet, hands are tied

FT: The dead's body?

TG3: the dead's body, yes. So, we would let him sit on a chair facing the door, so he will be welcoming those who will be coming inside and then ah it is best to tie the mouth because when we do not tie it, because we do not use embalm, we do not do embalming, so the mouth will open and tongue would come out, so we would tie it.

### **Physical Description**

Due to different linguistic backgrounds, the speaker creates an image of the features and characteristics of a concept unfamiliar to the other person. The strategy is to describe the physical attributes closely associated with the term being referred to. The physical description may include size, shape, color, and material (Paribakht, 1980). For example:

TG10: So, from the house we would untie him (dead) from the chair and would wrap him on a traditional blanket, traditional cloth, ah but before, when there were no clothes ehmm, we

would use the vines from the forest to tie them. But when the traditional cloth came, we use, we made use of them, so we wrap him and ah would carry them from the house. So, you would see, you would be expecting that the body is in a fetal position, since he's seated on a chair,  
FT: yeah

TG10: Fetal position, like a ball ah we ahmm, passing them from the house, where they would be passing them each other. It is like a ball, the dead body.

### **Materials to Increase Awareness of SC**

Brochures and pamphlets are communication materials usually handed to visitors by tour guides and tourism officers to give them basic information about the place they want to visit. It has beautiful images, short descriptions, and contact information in an emergency. The brochure as a material is practical for tour guides. They can carry it on their tour and may read it while waiting for clients. This brochure will add to their linguistic input, and they could be able to forecast communication breakdowns as portrayed in the brochure and would prepare strategies ahead of time. The pre-verbal strategies are also indicated in the brochure (Table 11).

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## **C o n c l u s i o n s**

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Based on the findings, the following conclusions were derived: 1) the local tour guides encounter various forms of communication breakdowns in their everyday conversation with foreign tourists; 2) the local tour guides have enough verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to address communication breakdowns in the field; and 3) the educational brochure will add input materials for the local tourist guides' improvement of their strategic competences.

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## **R e c o m m e n d a t i o n s**

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The following recommendations are being forwarded for future development programs and policy creation for the improvement of communication skills of the tour guides, as well as for educational purposes in preparation for senior high school students taking the Tourism strand: 1) Strategic competence may be included in





**Table 11**

*Contents of Pamphlet: Highlights of Different Strategies Printed in the Pamphlet*

Topics	Communication Focus
A. Communication Breakdowns	-Resource Deficit -Processing Time Pressure -Perceived Deficiency in One's Own Language, and Perceived Deficiency in the Interlocutor's Performance
B. Verbal Strategic Competences	-Avoidance or Reduction Strategies -Achievement or Compensatory Strategies -Stalling/Time-Gaining Strategies -Self-Monitoring Strategies -Interactional Strategies
C. Non-Verbal Competences	-Achievement or Compensatory Strategies -Interactional Strategies -Meaningful Gestures

seminars given to tour guides, specifically on how they may learn to address communication breakdowns and what appropriate strategies can be used to manage them; 2) Tour guides are encouraged to develop their linguistic input to aid in their acquisition of verbal strategic competence; 3) ESL Classroom teachers may teach strategic competence and utilize educational brochures to show how it was done in actual conversations; and 4) Further study can be conducted on communication challenges of tour guides in Sagada, Mt. Province who are physically handicapped.

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